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Title:
Happy Birthday to Us - The Professional Development Section is Two Years Old.

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The Professional Development Section -a new venture of *FEMS Microbiology Letters*- is already celebrating two years of providing the community with timely articles of interest to microbiologists at various stages of their career.

Where article usage information was available by end of 2016, Mendeley demographics placed our valued readership around the globe (e.g. China, Mexico, South Africa, United Kingdom, United States). Most readers identified as postgraduate students, but also undergraduates, researchers and academics at all career levels have frequently been interested in our articles. As initially intended, we have successfully reached colleagues in microbiology and related disciplines as well as in various biological and biomedical sciences. We are excited to have extended the audience of our section also into the world of business, computer science, design, engineering, humanities, mathematics, philosophy, psychology and social sciences given the transferable aspects of Professional Development, e.g. related to education.

How are we doing otherwise? Becoming more independent and beginning to run are important milestones for a toddler by two years according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2016). Well, this has indeed been happening for the Professional Development Section. In 2015 we published five MiniReviews and six in 2016, seven and then six Research Letters, and five and then 14 Commentaries. We are delighted that authors from more than 15 countries around the world submitted their manuscripts to our section. About 10 % of authors had got a non-microbiology background and about further 10 % had got a non-biological background.

We have already covered hot topics from antimicrobial agents and clinical microbiology training to emerging pedagogies and outreach, from professional identity to academic professional development, from employability to mobility, and from peer review to history of microbiology. In November 2015 we celebrated the launch of our Thematic Issue on Education (<http://femsle.oxfordjournals.org/page/thematic-issue-education>), and in mid 2016 the launch of the Thematic Series of Spotlights, which aims to inspire the next generation by illustrating the work and life of microbiologists. I will cover this series in more detail another time. Positive feedback from our readership welcomed that *FEMSLE* acknowledged the importance of microbiology education and the scholarship of teaching and learning.

It is impossible to directly compare overall access and download figures for our articles given the varying times of publication, level of promotion and whether they are Open Access or not. Instead I looked at general trends, averages and some highlights from our inception to November 2016 inclusive. Every month every abstract of the Professional Development Section is being accessed in average 83 times, every paper fully accessed 25 times and every pdf downloaded 15 times. The so far highest counts in just one single month for full paper access (430 times) and pdf downloads (230 times) as well as the highest average pdf downloads per month were achieved by Kelwick *et al.* (2015) for their MiniReview about the International Genetically Engineered Machines competition. The most accessed abstracts (1016 and 857 times, respectively) in one single month were recorded in

2015 for Redfern and Verran's article on microbiology professionals' scientific identity, and in 2016 for Karbownik *et al.* on board game versus lecture. With about 100 times every month, the so far highest average full access numbers have been seen each for Fahnert (2016) reviewing the Thematic Issue on Education, Cotton *et al.* (2016) discussing perceptions of peer review in the community, and Jansson (2016) being in the spotlight; as well as the highest average pdf downloads every month have been seen for Cossart (2016) being in the spotlight. With more than 200 times every month, the so far highest average abstract access figures have been counted each for O'Malley (2016; philosophy issues of microbiology), Sonnenborn (2016; *E. coli* Nissle strain), Lofgren (2016; mathematical modelling and zombies) and Rodrigues *et al.* (2016; international mobility). These figures compare well with the other sections of *FEMSLE*, and we have already been pleased to see external citations of about a third of our papers.

We have very much enjoyed developing and growing for you, and we are already working on and looking forward to what you can expect in 2017 and beyond. We are anticipating to see topics such as doctoral education, bridging the academia–industry gap, students as researchers, evidence-based teaching, inclusive pedagogies and gamification. A Thematic Series on Careers will be launched, where Bob Dolan from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology will cover issues from job search strategies to questions one can ask in a job interview. We had already hoped to provide perspectives from women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics around the globe as well as discussions of citation metrics and related aspects, but only few potential authors had come forward and hopefully more will feel encouraged to in the future.

Many thanks for your interest in our section so far. I hope you keep enjoying our coverage, and that you will find much inspiration for your practice. Do not hesitate to get in touch with me with questions and suggestions. I am extending an invitation to submit suitable manuscripts.

I would also like to thank all our authors, Handling Editors and reviewers, the production and marketing team at *FEMSLE* and OUP, and the *FEMSLE* Editor-in-Chief.

For our Professional Development Section “many happy returns of the day” means: keeping receiving high-quality submissions and being read. We will keep doing our best in support of the community.

Beatrix Fahnert, Section Editor Professional Development, FEMS Microbiology Letters.

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